

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ANKARA 09480 01 OF 02 051559Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7102

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

USEUCOM

CINCUSAFE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 9480

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, TU

SUBJ: RENEWED STUDENT ACTIVISM IN TURKEY

SUMMARY: SINCE TURKISH UNIVERSITIES OPENED CLASSES IN OCTOBER AND EARLY NOVEMBER, A NUMBER OF VIOLENT CLASHES BETWEEN LEFTIST AND RIGHTIST GROUPS (SOME WITH ANTI-AMERICAN ASPECTS) HAVE BROUGHT TO AN END TWO YEARS OF RELATIVE QUIET ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES. ALTHOUGH STUDENT VIOLENCE HAS NOT REACHED THE HIGH LEVEL THAT PRECEDED THE MILITARY INTERVENTIONS IN 1960 AND 1971, THE PROBLEM HAS SERIOUS POTENTIAL AND THE GOVERNMENT COULD BE FORCED TO TAKE STRICT MEASURES. END SUMMARY.

1. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MINOR INCIDENTS LAST SPRING (ANKARA 2416), TURKISH UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES HAD UNTIL RECENT WEEKS REMAINED RELATIVELY QUIET FOR ROUGHLY TWO YEARS. APPARENTLY THERE WERE THREE PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR THAT QUIET:
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PAGE 02 ANKARA 09480 01 OF 02 051559Z

A. THE CRACKDOWN ON STUDENT VIOLENCE -- AND THE RADICAL

LEFT IN GENERAL -- DURING THE MARTIAL LAW PERIOD (APRIL 1971-
SEPTEMBER 1973). T ZEGD#

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REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH MOVEMENT (DEI GENC), WHICH WAS HELD
RESPONSIBLE FOR MANY ACTS OF VIOLENCE, AS WELL AS THE
EXECUTION IN MAY 1972 OF DEV GENC LEADER DENIZ GEZMIS AND TWO
OTHERS, AND THE IMPRISONMENT OF MANY LESSER ACTIVISTS.

B. THE SELF-RESTRAINT OF THE REMAINING LEFTISTS DURING
THE 1973-74 ACADEMIC YEAR WHILE THE AMNESTY BILL THAT
ULTIMATELY FREED THEIR IMPRISONED FRIENDS WAS PENDING IN
PARLIAMENT.

C. A GENERAL LACK OF OCCASION FOR RIGHTIST ACTION
(EXCEPT FOR AN APPARENT RIGHTIST EFFORT LAST SPRING TO STAGE
INCIDENTS WHILE THE AMNESTY LAW WAS BEING DEBATED).

2. THE PRINCIPAL INCIDENTS OF RECENT WEEKS HAVE INCLUDED
THE FOLLOWING:

A. AT ISTANBUL UNIVERSITY THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS HAVE
BOYCOTTED CLASSES SINCE OPENING OF ACADEMIC YEAR IN
PROTEST OF EDUCATION SYSTEM. E.G., EXAM REFORMS. THERE
WAS AN ANTI-KISSINGER DEMONSTRATION ON NOVEMBER 8, AND
SERIOUS FIGHTING BETWEEN RIGHT AND LEFT-WING STUDENT GROUPS
ON NOVEMBER 24, AFTER WHICH UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES CLOSED
LAW, MEDICAL, AND ECONOMICS FACULTIES FOR THREE DAYS.
(ISTANBUL 3101 AND 3236).

B. CLASHES BETWEEN RIGHT-WING "COMMANDOS" AND
LEFTISTS AT ISTANBUL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY ON NOVEMBER 11 AND
ISTANBUL STATE ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURAL ACADEMY ON
NOVEMBER 28. LATTER SCHOOL HAS BEEN CLOSED INDEFINITELY.
(ISTANBUL 3236).

C. IN ANKARA, VIOLENCE ERUPTED AT BOTH MIDDLE EAST
TECHNICAL (METU) AND HACETTEPE UNIVERSITIES ON
NOVEMBER 7-8, AND SMALL GROUP OF METU STUDENTS BURNED
HOMEMADE AMERICAN FLAG IN FRONT OF USIS OFFICES
(ANKARA 8757). ALSO, DURING NOVEMBER STUDENT BOYCOTTS
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PAGE 03 ANKARA 09480 01 OF 02 051559Z

TOOK PLACE AT LAW AND POLITICAL SCIENCE FACULTIES OF
ANKARA UNIVERSITY.

D. BOYCOTT AT AEGEAN UNIVERSITY IN IZMIR BEGAN
NOVEMBER 20 IN MEDICAL FACULTY, SOON SPREAD TO OTHERS,
AND SCHOOL WAS CLOSED BY AUTHORITIES UNTIL NOVEMBER 25,
ALTHOUGH STUDENTS BY AND LARGE CONTINUED TO STAY AWAY
FROM CLASSES AFTERWARDS. ROCK FIGHT BETWEEN STUDENTS
TOOK PLACE ON NOVEMBER 26. (IZMIR 343, 348, AND 350.)

E. IN TWO SEPARATE INCIDENTS AT ERZURUM ON DECEMBER 3, SIX STUDENTS WERE SERIOUSLY INJURED IN FIGHTING BETWEEN LEFTIST AND RIGHTIST GROUPS AT ATATURK UNIVERSITY AND KAZIM KARABEKIR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE.

F. APPROXIMATELY 143 STUDENTS WERE TAKEN INTO CUSTODY FOLLOWING CLASHES BETWEEN RIGHTIST AND LEFTIST GROUPS AT THE ANKARA UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF LETTERS AND AGRICULTURAL FACULTY ON DECEMBER 4.

3. THE USE OF STUDENT AND YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES WAS A FEATURE OF TURKISH POLITICAL LIFE DURING MOST OF THE 1950'S AND 1960'S. STUDENT DISTURBANCES PLAYED A PART IN BRINGING ABOUT THE DOWNFALL OF MENDERES IN 1960, AND THE WAVE OF STUDENT VIOLENCE THAT BEGAN IN THE LATE 1960'S HELPED LEAD TO THE MILITARY "COUP BY MEMORANDUM" AGAINST DEMIREL ON MARCH 12, 1971. HOWEVER, THE CURRENT WAVE OF DISORDERS DOES NOT SEEM DIRECTED AGAINST ANY POLITICAL PARTY OR LEADER. WHILE SOME OF THE LEADERS COULD BE GENERALLY MOTIVATED BY THE OBJECTIVE OF DISRUPTING PUBLIC ORDER, MOST INCIDENTS SO FAR SEEM PRIMARILY RELATED TO CAMPUS POLITICS RATHER THAN NATIONAL POLITICS.

4. THESE INCIDENTS HAVE GENERALLY BEEN STARTED PRESUMABLY AS MEANS OF PROTESTING FOR REFORMS IN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM (E.G., FOOD SERVICE, DORMITORIES, EXAMINATIONS, AVAILABILITY OF TEXTBOOKS), BUT MOST HAVE QUICKLY BECOME LEFT-RIGHT CONFRONTATIONS. REPEATED BATTLES BETWEEN LEFTIST AND RIGHTIST GROUPS (FREQUENTLY EMPLOYING ROCKS, CLUBS, AND KNIVES AS WEAPONS) SUGGEST THAT THE POLITICAL DIVISIONS AMONG TURKISH STUDENTS ARE BECOMING SHARPER AND, AT THE SAME TIME, THAT STUDENT GROUPS ARE ONCE AGAIN BECOMING INCREASINGLY AGGRESSIVE IN ASSERTING THEIR STRENGTH AGAINST RIVAL GROUPS, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 ANKARA 09480 01 OF 02 051559Z

CONTRARY TO TREND AMONG THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN WESTERN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES.

5. A NUMBER OF FACTORS PROBABLY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE REVIVAL OF STUDENT VIOLENCE IN TURKEY AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CURRENT ACADEMIC YEAR:

A. BUILDUP OF RESENTMENT AND FRUSTRATION OVER PAST TWO YEARS.

NOTE BY OC/T: PARA 1 (A) (##)AS RECEIVED.

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PAGE 01 ANKARA 09480 02 OF 02 051612Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05

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C O N F I D E N T I A L FINAL SECTION OF 2 ANKARA 9480

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT TU

SUBJ: RENEWED STUDENT ACTIVISM IN TURKEY

B. RELEASE OF A NUMBER OF LEFT-WING ACTIVIST LEADERS UNDER THE AMNESTY (MAY 1974), MANY OF WHOM ARE SAID TO BE BITTER OVER THEIR YEARS IN JAIL AND THE FACT THAT RIGHTIST LEADERS WERE NOT SIMILARLY TREATED.

C. RIGHT-WING ALARM OVER THE PROSPECTIVE REVIVAL OF THE LEFT AND INCREASED WILLINGNESS TO TRY TO PROVOKE THE LEFTISTS TO VIOLENCE IN THE HOPE OF ANOTHER CRACKDOWN ON THE LEFT BY THE AUTHORITIES.

D. RESIGNATION OF ECEVIT GOVERNMENT REMOVED CONSTRAINT (WHICH APPEARED TO BE SLIPPING ANYWAY) IMPOSED BY THE DESIRE OF PRO-ECEVIT STUDENTS NOT TO DISCREDIT A LEFT-OF-CENTER GOVERNMENT.

6. WHILE ACTIVIST STUDENTS REMAIN A MINORITY, IT IS RELATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 ANKARA 09480 02 OF 02 051612Z

EASY FOR SMALL, TIGHTLY KNIT GROUPS TO DISRUPT CAMPUS LIFE, CONSIDERING THAT THERE ARE ALWAYS GRIEVANCES ON WHICH TO BUILD A PROTEST. THE ACTIVIST MINORITY IS, HOWEVER, FRAGMENTED INTO A CONSTANTLY CHANGING ARRAY OF ORGANIZATIONS ON BOTH LEFT AND RIGHT.

A. AMONG THE PRINCIPAL LEFTIST STUDENT GROUPS, AT LEAST THE FIRST TWO OF THE FOLLOWING ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN RECENT INCIDENTS:

(1) ISTANBUL HIGHER EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (KNOWN BY ITS TURKISH INITIALS AS "IYOKD"), ALLEGED SUCCESSOR TO THE DEV GENC GROUP, AND BELIEVED TO BE THE YOUTH BRANCH OF THE TURKISH SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY.

(2) ANKARA DEMOCRATIC HIGHER EDUCATION ASSOCIATION ("ADYOD"), A SIMILAR ORGANIZATION IN ANKARA UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF EMIN TANRIYAR.

(3) FOLLOWERS OF ACTIVIST LEADER DOGU PERINCEK (ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE TURKISH REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS AND PEASANTS PARTY, WHO WAS RELEASED FROM PRISON UNDER THE AMNESTY) HAVE ESTABLISHED YET ANOTHER GROUP, THE REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH UNION("DGB") UNDER CELALETTIN ULUSOY.

B. RIGHT-WING STUDENT "COMMANDO" GROUPS, FREQUENTLY WEARING THE NATIONALIST "GREY WOLF" EMBLEM (BOZKURT), ARE GENERALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE IDEALISTS HEARTH ASSOCIATION (ULKU OCAKLAR), WHICH IS IN EFFECT THE YOUTH AND STUDENT BRANCH OF THE RIGHTIST NATIONAL MOVEMENT PARTY OF ALPASLAN TURKES. (TURKES HAS TOLD US THAT, TO STOP THE SPREAD OF COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN THE UNIVERSITIES, HIS YOUTH GROUP PROVIDES BOTH AN ALTERNATIVE CREED -- WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS LARGELY NATIONALISM -- AND AN ALTERNATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL HOME. HE CLAIMED THAT HIS STUDENT SUPPORTERS NUMBERED IN THE THOUSANDS.)

7. WHILE THE CURRENT DISTURBANCES HAVE SO FAR BEEN ADEQUATELY CONTAINED BY CIVILIAN POLICE AND JANDARMA, THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT THE HANDLING OF STUDENT VIOLENCE COULD AGAIN BECOME -- AS IN 1959-60 AND 1969-71 -- A SEVERE PROBLEM FOR WHATEVER GOVERNMENT IS IN POWER. ACCORDING TO SEVERAL UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS, PROSPECT IS FOR CONTINUED OUTBREAKS OF STUDENT VIOLENCE IN COMING MONTHS (ONE POTENTIAL OCCASION WOULD BE THE CUT-OFF OF U.S. MILITARY AID). WHILE IT HAS BEEN GENERALLY ASSUMED THAT A CENTER-CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 ANKARA 09480 02 OF 02 051612Z

LEFT GOVERNMENT (PERHAPS UNDER FORMER PRIME MINISTER ECEVIT, WHO HAS STRONG SUPPORT AMONG STUDENTS) WOULD HAVE THE BEST CHANCE OF DEFUSING STUDENT DISTURBANCES, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO CONTAIN COMPLETELY THE ACTIVITIES OF SMALL GROUPS OF WELL-ORGANIZED EXTREMISTS, IF THEY ARE BENT ON CAUSING DISRUPTIONS.

8. HOWEVER, PARLIAMENT DURING THE 1971-3 PERIOD PASSED
A SERIES OF LAWS EMPOWERING THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE STRICT
MEASURES AGAINST STUDENT VIOLENCE AND OTHER FORMS OF PUBLIC
DISORDERS. THE CURRENT WAVE OF STUDENT UNREST, IF IT GROWS,
COULD WELL CAUSE THOSE STRICT MEASURES TO BE PUT TO THE TEST
OF PREVENTING WIDESPREAD DISRUPTION OF PUBLIC ORDER.
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